

LESPEDEZA CUNEATA (FABACEAE), A FIRST RECORD OF ITS OCCURRENCE IN MEXICO

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ABSTRACT

Lespedeza cuneata (Dum.Cours.) G. Don, a native species from eastern Asia and introduced in the U.S.A., is reported for first time to Mexico. Recent botanical field collections between Cuauhtémoc and La Junta, in Chihuahua, Mexico have extended its distribution about 800 km southwestern from its previously known range, in eastern Texas.

RESÚMEN

Lespedeza cuneata (Dum.Cours.) G. Don, una especie nativa del este de Asia e introducida en los E.U.A se cita por primera vez para México. Colecciones recientes de material botánico entre Cuauhtémoc y La Junta, en el estado norteño de Chihuahua, México, permiten extender su rango de distribución cerca de 800 km al sur de su rango de distribución conocido, en el este de Texas.

The genus *Lespedeza* is present in Australia, eastern Asia and eastern North America (Clewel 1966; Turner 1959; Correll & Johnston 1979). Three species of *Lespedeza*, *L. striata* (Thunb.) H. & A., *L. stipulacea* Maxim. and *L. cuneata* (Dum.cours.) G. Don, have been introduced in eastern U.S.A. to prevent soil erosion, for green manure and for forage for cattle and wildlife. (Clewel 1966). *Lespedeza cuneata* is one of many plants used for soil and water conservation; it provides good ground cover on soils that are not adequate for other plants, and it helps build the soil by replenishing the nitrogen supply (Guernsey 1970). In Mexico there are only isolated records for this genus: *L. virginica* (L.) Britton and *L. texana* Britton are reported for Coahuila (Clewel 1966), and Estrada and Marroquín (1992) reported *L. repens* for central part of Nuevo León. There are no records of *Lespedeza* species for Sonora (Shreve & Wiggins 1964), Arizona (Kearney & Pebbles 1960), and Chihuahua (Estrada & Martínez 2000). Figure 1 shows its historical and recent range distribution in U.S. A. and Mexico.

Lespedeza cuneata (Dum.Cours.) G. Don

Perennial herb, 25–45 cm tall; stems several from the base, erect and, ascending, branched above, longitudinally ribbed, appressed pubescent, the trichomes 0.2–0.4 mm long, white, most abundant in ribs; stipules persistent, linear lanceolate, 2.5–5 mm long, striate, sparsely pubescent; leaves abundant, crowded, trifoliolate, petioles 2–3.5 mm long; leaflets cuneate 7–10(–18) mm long, 2–3 mm wide, apex retuse, truncate or mucronate, glabrous above, sparse pubescent below, lateral veins ascendant, branched, anastomosed; inflorescences axillary, shorter

than the foliage, solitary or in pairs; pedicels 1 mm long; bractlets 2, ovate, apex attenuate, 1.2–1.9 mm long; calyx narrowly campanulate, 4–4(–5) mm long, 1–3 mm wide, 5-dentate, the throat 1.3–1.5 mm long, the teeth 2.7–3 mm long, lanceolate, the two upper notched less deeply than three lower ones; corollas white, papilionate; banner obovate or spatulate, 6–7.3 mm long, the base thin, auriculate and unguiculate, with a purple throat, the wings narrowly oblong, inequilateral, 6–6.2 mm long, 1.3 mm wide, the keel incurved, 6–7 mm long, 1–3 mm wide, apex retuse; stamens 10, diadelphous; ovary ovate; style linear filiform; fruit in lower branches originated from cleistogamous flowers, rounded, 2 mm in diameter, reticulate, the style tightly recurved, sparse pubescent; fruits of chasmogamous flowers undeveloped.

Specimens examined: **Chihuahua**: km 135 carretera Cuauhtémoc–La Junta, a la altura de Páramo de Morelos, Mpio. Guerrero, vegetación de pastizal mediano abierto de *Bouteloua gracilis*, *Brickellia* spp., *Mimosa aculeaticarpa*, 1950 m.s.n.m., 25.Jul. 1994, C. Yen, E. Estrada 2693 (ANSM, CFNL, TEX).

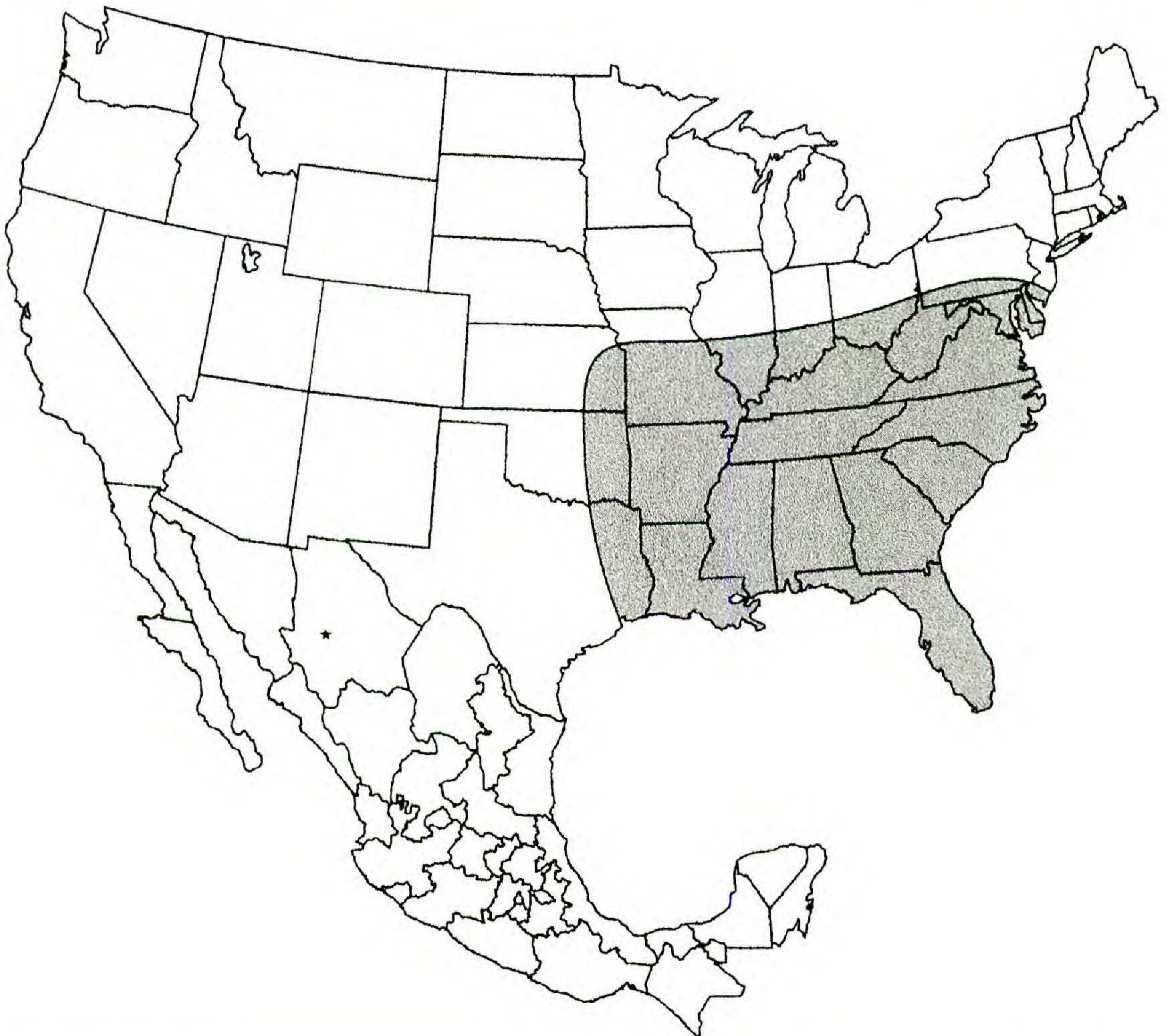


Fig. 1 Map showing distribution of *Lespedeza cuneata* (Dumont) G. Don, in U.S.A. and Mexico (State of Chihuahua).

The presence of *Lespedeza cuneata* is sporadic, and patchy along roadsides, it does not appear to invade adjacent abandoned croplands. This species has not been internationally introduced in Chihuahua (people of the area, personal comments). As far as we observed, its distribution comprises small patches in an area of 26 km in this area. (from km 120 to km 146 Cuauhtémoc–La Junta highway).

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